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CHRISTIANITY ESSENTIAL TO LIBERTY.

A SERMON,

IN AID OF HUNGARY.

PREACHED ON THANKSGIVING DAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1851.

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SERMON.

JOHN 8 : 32.

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.

By the Truth is here intended the *doctrines of Christ*—the system of truth known as Christianity. The FREEDOM here spoken of, is primarily a spiritual freedom. *Personal* freedom is exemption from the constraint or control of others; it is a state in which one exercises his natural liberty to act as he thinks fit, without any arbitrary or forcible restraint from the will of another. *Civil* or *political* freedom is a state in which one exercises his natural or personal liberty, subject only to the restraints of law or of civil government established for the safety and interest of society. Where this liberty is perfect, there is no more abridgment of personal freedom than is necessary for the public good; anything beyond this is tyranny or oppression.

Religious liberty is "the free right of adopting and enjoying opinions on religious subjects, and of worshiping the Supreme Being according to the dictates of conscience, without external control."

These are the various forms of liberty, commonly known among men. But besides these, which are mainly external, there is a higher liberty of the *soul*, a spiritual freedom or the liberty of the Gospel. This is the freedom spoken of in the text.

The political state of the Jews was at that time almost a state of servitude. They were subjugated to the Roman yoke, and their national independence was completely destroyed. Their national pride, however, was not subdued, and retaining the most exalted views of their calling as the peo-

ple of God, they embarked in a "fanatic strife" for freedom, which, during their contests with the Romans, often issued in the most horrible scenes. Jehovah had brought them into a state of oppression as a punishment for their sins; but instead of repenting and turning to the Lord, they were either restive and complaining—endeavoring to regain their freedom by conquest—or they were sullen in the fanatical conceit of their own superiority as the favorites of heaven. "Nothing was more intolerable to them than to be considered the slaves of men. In their longing after the Messiah, they were beguiled especially by the hope that this Desired-One would make them the lords of the world. Hence it must have greatly surprised them that Jesus, whom they were disposed to regard as the Messiah, should treat them as slaves."

This state of mind is apparent in the context. Many of the Jews, we are told, "believed on him;" not that they apprehended his true character and received him spiritually, but because of his miracles and sayings, they looked upon him as the promised Messiah. In order to test their sincerity, Jesus said to those Jews who believed [or professed to believe] on him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." At this intimation of their state of bondage they took great offense, and supposing that he had reference to an external condition of slavery, they at once adduced their noble origin from Abraham the friend of God. "They answered him, We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?" They were indignant at the thought that they—the children of Abraham—could really be in bondage, though for the time they were under the rod of an oppressor. Their national spirit was not subdued, and their national prerogatives as the chosen seed were not forfeited. Hereupon Jesus proceeded to give them a deeper idea of freedom, its nature and conditions. He answered them, "Verily, verily I say to you, whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." There is the radical idea of slavery. He who yields himself to sin, is under the control of sin; he thereby becomes its slave; he acts wholly

from a selfish motive, and that motive, whether in an individual or in a nation, is itself a bondage. "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house forever, but the son abideth ever." Although externally, as children of the promise, you are in the house of God, yet that external relation alone will not forever bind you to his family, for you have surrendered yourselves as slaves to a strange master—to the world, to self, to Satan,—and in that bondage you will perish unless delivered from it by a power from without. None can deliver you but the Son who forever abideth in a living fellowship with the Father, who is wholly free from sin, and who is heir to his Father's power. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Christ thus identifies himself with his truth, as the Author and Source of true Freedom.

The truth of Christ emancipates the mind from error, from superstition, from doubt, from fear, from vain philosophy and traditions of men, from forms and ceremonies, from lust, from selfishness, from every phase of sin. It would be interesting to follow out this train of thought in its personal application; but the principle of the text admits of a much wider range than that of individual emancipation from sin; and it befits this occasion to apply the subject to general or national interests. It is true of nations as of individuals, that the truth alone can make them free. I purpose to show, in this discourse, that

CHRISTIANITY RECEIVED IN ITS SPIRIT AND POWER INTO THE HEART OF A NATION, IS THE ONLY TRUE AND PERMANENT FOUNDATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIBERTY.

The subject may be viewed historically and philosophically.

Prior to the introduction of Christianity, with the exception of the Hebrew Commonwealth in its purity, no nation recognized civil liberty as a universal right, or enjoyed political liberty as a permanent possession. The reader of history may be disposed to meet this assertion by a reference to the republics of Greece and Rome, especially the former, from which our very term Democracy is derived. But an

analysis of the constitution of those republics, will show that they were not based upon any just idea of freedom, nor pervaded by its true spirit. The republicanism of that era was based, not upon general principles of right and of humanity, but upon the selfish interests of the more numerous class, who, by long-continued opposition to other classes, rose from a condition of dependence to one of power. Take for example the anomalous republic of Sparta. "The form of government universally prevalent in the Homeric or heroic age appears to have been a monarchy, limited by ancient custom as well as by a body of powerful chiefs, who were almost the king's equals; it was, in fact, an aristocracy, with an hereditary prince at its head."* By degrees the power of the nobles increased at the expense of that of the kings, till at length even the title of royalty was abolished. In Sparta this change was very gradual. For a considerable period there were two kings, who exercised power either jointly or alternately; these were also priests of Jupiter. The nobles held most of the landed property, and thus kept the reins of government in their own hands. "In the course of time, while the ruling body remained stationary, or was even losing strength, the commonalty—the class which, though personally free, was at first excluded from all share in the government—was constantly growing in numbers and wealth, was becoming more united in itself, more conscious of its resources, and more disposed to put forward new claims. This was the case, especially in the larger cities, which were at all times the most formidable opponents of oligarchies."† Hence arose a series of struggles between the nobles and the common people, which issued sometimes in a temporary despotism and sometimes in an almost democracy. A senate of twenty-eight elders, holding office for life, was constituted by Lycurgus; in this senate the two kings sat and voted, until royalty was finally abolished. Besides this "there were periodical assemblies of the Spartan people in the open air. Yet no discussion was permitted in these assemblies—their

* Schmitz, p. 124. † Do., p. 125.

functions were limited to the simple acceptance or rejection of that which had previously been determined in the senate."* The number of citizens qualified to appear in these assemblies was small, and the whole thing was "little better than an inoperative formality." Although there was afterwards a sort of representative body from the people,—the Ephors, an Executive Directory, whose power became almost absolute—yet the rights of free suffrage and free speech were never recognized, and "nothing was more characteristic of the government than the extreme secrecy of its proceedings."

What, now, was the state of society under this government? The proper and privileged Spartans who had a right to appear in the public assembly, were but a small proportion of the entire population. The fully qualified citizens "lived in Sparta itself, fulfilled all the exigencies of the Lycurgean discipline, paid their quota to the Syrsitia, or public mess, and were alone eligible to honor or public offices. They were maintained from lands round about the city, which were tilled for them by Helots, who seem to have paid over to them a fixed proportion of the produce."† These full-privileged burghers were mere consumers, and contributed in no way to the resources from which their dignity was supported. Their number, however, was diminished by the disfranchisement of the poor. In addition to these was a numerous class of provincials, called Periœki, who resided in the villages and rural districts; "these had no share in the political privileges of the Spartans; yet they bore the heaviest share of the public burdens, and had to fight the battles, the principal object of which was to gratify the pride and ambition of the Spartans."‡ But there was yet another very large class—the Helots, the descendants of the conquered inhabitants of the country, who were held in a state of villenage, if not of absolute servitude. They were bound to the soil—*adscripti glebæ*—and could not be torn from it, or sold into another country, and in that respect their condition was more

* Grote's History of Greece, ii., 356. † Do., ii., 362. ‡ Schmitz, 94.

favorable than that of the slaves in this country, more like that of the serfs in Russia, who are sold with the land. They belonged rather to the state than to the master. Yet their condition was one of extreme degradation; they were regarded with jealousy and suspicion, and were treated with contempt and cruelty. One well-attested fact will show the terrible condition of society in the Spartan State. On a certain occasion, after the Helots had been called upon for signal military efforts in various ways, the Spartans became apprehensive of an outbreak. "Anxious to single out the most forward and daring Helots, as the men from whom they had most to dread, they issued proclamation that every member of that class who had rendered distinguished services should make his claims known at Sparta, promising liberty to the most deserving. A large number of Helots came forward to claim the boon: not less than two thousand of them were approved, formally manumitted, and led in solemn procession round the temples, with garlands on their heads, as an inauguration to their coming life of freedom. But the treacherous garlands only marked them out as victims for the sacrifice: every man of them forthwith disappeared—the manner of their death was an untold mystery."*

What a state of society was that in which such a monstrous outrage could be perpetrated in open day, without awakening discussion, remonstrance, or curiosity, and could be consummated so effectually that the diligent and careful historian Thucydides could get no satisfactory information of the manner in which the victims were destroyed. Such was liberty in Sparta; the personal liberty of a few—and that hedged round by State restrictions, interfering with the family institution and with domestic education, forbidding commerce, forbidding citizens to leave the country and foreigners to enter it—while the masses were held in a servitude the most abject, and subjected to cruelties the most revolting. In such a state there was no proper idea of liberty—no recognition of human rights—no principle of justice or humanity—no regard what-

* Grote, ii., 377.

ever for general rights—nothing but the selfish contention of class with class for their own narrow interests. A constitutional liberty for the people, based upon intelligent views of the rights of man, was utterly unknown in Sparta.

Nor was this idea developed in the more democratic government of Athens. In this state there was a venerable Senate, the Areopagus, which enjoyed a life-tenure, and exercised certain prescriptive and hereditary rights. This body had a semi-religious character, and a large and undefined controlling power. In addition to this there was an annual Senate of Five Hundred; under Pericles, the magistrates were chosen by lot, "thus equalizing the chances of office to every candidate;" and there was also a public deliberative assembly meeting periodically during the year and in a prescribed place. But the grand feature of the Athenian government was that introduced by Pericles, of dikasteries, or paid jury courts, in which the panel consisted not of twelve men but of five hundred, and to one of these every judicial case must be submitted. Here certainly was a fine development of the democratic principle. And yet in the Athenian government, there was a constant strife between the oligarchy and the democracy—a clashing of rival castes and interests, which issued in the most arbitrary and retaliatory measures, as either gained the ascendency. The secret ballot thus became an engine of despotism for the banishment of unpopular citizens. There were no constitutional guarantees of personal rights—there was no recognition of rights as *rights*; but the poor and the middling classes wrested for themselves what power they could, and the rich conceded only what they had not the ability to retain.

In Attica as in Sparta there were three classes: the citizens or freemen, who alone had any voice in the government; the foreigners or sojourners, who had no political privileges or preferments, but were subjected to a tax and were liable to be sold in default of paying it; and the slaves, who were by far the most numerous. A poll, or census, on one occasion, returned 21,000 citizens, 10,000 resident aliens, and

400,000 slaves.* Although slavery in Athens was regulated by law, and existed in a somewhat mitigated form, yet the great masses of the population were held in a state of political and personal degradation. It was the policy of those in power to extinguish in their slaves every spark of manhood and every aspiration for liberty. I have said that foreigners and their descendants were liable to be sold into slavery for the non-payment of the tax imposed upon them for the privilege of a residence in Attica. The philosopher Xenocrates was actually thus sold and afterwards redeemed by a friend.

These facts will serve to show the extent of popular liberty in Athens; the liberty of one-twentieth part of the population, held at the expense of all the rest; and even in that fraction of the population, indigence was often made a bar to the exercise of political rights, even by a free-born citizen. I am aware that it is difficult for us at a distance of more than two thousand years, and with the scanty materials at command, to form a just estimate of Athenian society. Two thousand years hence a historian may write that, in the middle of the nineteenth century, there were in the United States 3,000,000 of slaves; that slave-hunting was practiced by law throughout the Union; that men and women were seized at their labor, or in their homes, and, without a jury-trial, or any of the customary defenses of law, were hurried before a solitary and subaltern officer of the government, who was bribed by an extra fee to deliver them over to slavery, and were then consigned to hopeless bondage under the revengeful or the lustful passions of irresponsible masters. The historian might further show that men and women were obliged to flee out of this so-called republic into a neighboring monarchy, in order to enjoy their personal liberty; and that even ministers of the Gospel, honorably connected with leading ecclesiastical bodies, were detained in foreign lands, and under monarchical governments, by the fear of being seized and sold into slavery upon this soil. He might show likewise that these things were not done in a corner, but were justified in the national

* Boeckh's Public Economy of Athens, Vol. I.

councils, in political conventions, and even by the pulpit! And from all this the historian, two thousand years hence, might go on to infer that Christianity had not penetrated this nation, and that it had no just idea of liberty. But along with this class of facts he could have our Declaration of Independence, and Fourth of July orations innumerable, the Federal and State Constitutions, our naturalization laws, the decisions of our courts, the writings of our statesmen, the history of our Revolution, and the archives of the national government—all going to show that we understood the true theory of liberty, however hypocritical we may have been in the practice of it. Possibly, too, such a historian would find remonstrances against this oppression and injustice, showing that the public conscience was not indifferent to such an abuse of liberty. All this would lead him to modify his opinion of us, though such an anomaly would greatly perplex him.

Now we should not pronounce Athenian liberty defective, merely because slavery existed in that commonwealth; but while the evidences of oppression abound, there is no countervailing evidence on the side of freedom. There was in Athens no constitutional liberty based upon a definition and a recognition of human rights *as such;* there was no just theory or principle of liberty; there was no party in the State against slavery; no party based upon the doctrine of natural equality as a reason for political freedom; no protest against oppression from any of her statesmen, like that of Jefferson against domestic slavery,—"I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just." It is the absence of all these things that shows that Athenian liberty was not a thing of principle, but a personal and selfish matter,—a mere class interest, supremely selfish and tyrannical toward others.

The Roman Republic need detain us but a moment. In that, after the expulsion of Tarquinius, the last of the kings of Rome, we see a perpetual war of families and classes, first of the patricians and the plebeians; and afterward, as the old aristocracy declined, a new aristocracy was formed of the more wealthy of the commons, which constituted a moneyed and commercial interest, separated itself from the masses, and

took advantage of their pecuniary straits to oppress them in their political liberties. Hence proceeded, as Arnold has shown, "the gradual depression of the commons to that extreme point of misery, which led to the institution of the tribuneship. Immediately after the expulsion of the king, the commons shared in the advantages of the Revolution; but within a few years we find them so oppressed and powerless, that their utmost hopes aspired, not to the assertion of political equality with the burghers, but merely to the obtaining protection from personal injuries.

"The specific character of their degradation is stated to have been this; that there prevailed among them severe distress, amounting in many cases to actual ruin; that to relieve themselves of their poverty, they were in the habit of borrowing money of the burghers; that the distress continuing, they became generally insolvent; and that as the law of debtor and creditor was exceedingly severe, they became liable in their persons to the cruelty of the burghers, were treated by them as slaves, confined as such in their workhouses, kept to task-work, and often beaten at the discretion of their task-masters."*

Roman liberty, restricted as it was among the Romans themselves, and continually threatened by the feuds of classes, was not a liberty of *principle* for all mankind. The nations that Rome conquered were enslaved, and held under severe civil disabilities. Rome itself was filled with slaves. Individual citizens counted this species of property by thousands. And in Rome slavery existed in its most revolting form—it was simple *chattelism;* and it is from that, and not from Hebrew servitude, that the fundamental vice in American slavery is borrowed. The slave was not under law as a man, but under his master as a thing; and there was no redress for any cruelty that a master might inflict upon his slaves. Rome was a commonwealth of petty tyrants. Cato, who is celebrated as the most just and virtuous of Roman citizens, according to Plutarch, when his servants grew old and unfit

* Arnold's History of Rome, i., 92.

for labor, notwithstanding they had been very faithful and serviceable to him, and had spent their youth and strength in laboring for him, would not be at the charge of maintaining them, but either turned them away, unable to provide for themselves, or let them starve to death in his own family. Others were addicted to the cruelty of putting slaves to death, and feeding out their bodies piece-meal to the fish of their ponds to highten their flavor. In this horrible state of society Roman *liberty* flourished!—a liberty not of principle but of caste—a selfish liberty of the few against the rights and the happiness of the many.

Have I not now justified the assertion that before the introduction of Christianity, the true idea of civil liberty was unknown in the world? Here let it be observed, that there was nothing in the philosophy or the religion of the ancients, to suggest that idea. There was no philosophy of human rights, —there was no religion of universal love. On the contrary, philosophy was cold, speculative, reserved, sitting apart from the people in its pride; and religion dealt in mysteries, nurtured castes, favored priestly domination, and so far as related to the public, was intensely national and selfish. The gods were gods of particular nations; in that character they were hostile to each other, and their worship nurtured national pride and a spirit of jealousy. There was no sentiment of universal brotherhood in man; there was no recognition of man as the offspring of God. Nor was there in the religion of the ancients any reforming and elevating power, that could raise the masses in character and condition, and thus bring them into fellowship. The very character of the gods, the very rites of worship, conduced to the degradation of the people, and fitted them for bestiality and slavery.

The Hebrew Constitution as it came from Moses, contained the elements of liberty, and so far as its human administration was concerned, of a democracy. There has been but little advance upon its fundamental principles. But this constitution was soon departed from, and abuses crept in,

which rendered the political condition of the Israelites at times but little better than that of their heathen neighbors. This constitution, too, was strictly national and local, and its practical working engendered a spirit of pride and selfishness, from which the Jew is not delivered to this day. The doctrine of universal love was a new commandment of the new dispensation.

From this historical survey we will now turn to the *philosophical* view of the subject, and consider the principles of Christianity in their nature and in their practical application. These principles are the only true and permanent foundation of personal and civil liberty. The bare enumeration of the great principles of the Christian religion, will suffice to show their bearing upon the rights and liberties of men.

1. *Christianity ascribes to all men a common origin, and thus places them upon a natural equality toward each other, and before God.*

The Gospel recognizes no distinction of birth or blood. In the very face of Athenian pride that spurned the lowly origin of other nations, and by the lips of a Jew of the proud lineage of Abraham, it declares that God "made of one blood all nations of men." This doctrine of the unity and the universal brotherhood of the race, as sprung from a common stock by the power of the One Creator, lies at the very foundation of political liberty. Kings and priests have rested their claim of superiority upon pretensions of blood and race. The Brahmins have for ages maintained their despotism, by the religious isolation of castes, over which they held pre-eminence as "the chief of all creatures." The isolation of the nations of antiquity was preserved by the idea of a separate origin and a separate divinity for each; while royalty and priesthood maintained their sway by an alleged affinity with the gods. The Gospel doctrine of the unity of the race, interwoven as it is with the doctrine of the unity of the divine existence, overturns this ancient foundation of despotism. It teaches what was so terribly taught by the royal scaffolds of England

and France, that the blood of a king is even as the blood of a common man.

2. *Christianity regards all men as being naturally in the same moral state and makes their equality in this respect a fact of far greater moment than any diversities in their outward condition.*

Here is the leveling power of the Gospel. It brings the king from his throne down to the level of the meanest peasant as a sinner before God; it proclaims the universal guilt and wretchedness of men in every station and condition of life; it brings them together as moral beings upon the ground of common wants and a common helplessness. When all are thus prostrated before God, how can one rise up in pride against another?

3. *Christianity makes all men alike the subjects of a redemptive system, in which God himself appears for the restoration of the world to himself.*

Here is the elevating power of the Gospel; it brings the meanest peasant up by the side of the loftiest king, as a man for whom Christ died,—a man whose happiness in the sight of God is of such value, that for him Christ laid aside his heavenly glory, took upon him the nature of man, and suffered the agony of the cross. Of what priceless worth is a being for whom God has made such a demonstration of regard! This He has done equally for all; and wherever that truth penetrates, all men feel themselves upon an equality as the heirs of the same heavenly grace.

4. *Christianity teaches that all men are alike immortal; and by the grandeur and impressiveness of its revelations of the future, it exalts the spiritual above the material, and makes the personality of the man, his relations to God and to his fellows as a spiritual being, the one thing to be regarded.*

Here, again, is the ennobling power of the Gospel. Think of an immortal being bound in chains! One who shall live forever, and whose capacities for improvement and for happiness are boundless, here doomed to oppression and cruelty, like the beasts that perish! The bare conception of man's

immortality forbids the exercise of tyranny. In this view, man is too great, too noble, too precious, to be enslaved by his fellow-man.

5. *In its institutions, Christianity brings all men to a level for the common participation of rights and privileges.*

In the kingdom of Christ there are no ranks or orders, no dignitaries or powers,—but one is Master, even Christ, and "all they are brethren." There is no recognition of factitious social grades, nor any place for them. There is not one table spread for the rich, and another for the poor; there is not an anointing with oil for kings, and a baptism with water for subjects. All are partakers of one bread, all are baptized into one baptism. Every redeemed soul is a king and a priest to God, and it is impossible for any to attain a distinction higher than this.

6. *In its precepts Christianity forbids all pride, all self-exaltation, all oppression, all coercion, everything contrary to that moral equality upon which the whole system is based.*

The most terrific woes are denounced in the Gospel against those that oppress the poor, and defraud the hireling; against such as usurp power or abuse it; against every form of selfishness. God resisteth the proud; He will judge the cause of the poor and the needy. Truth, justice, mercy, compassion, are every where inculcated in the New Testament, and their opposites condemned. Where these precepts are observed there can be no tyranny, nor any wrong between man and man.

7. *The characteristic spirit of Christianity and a cardinal doctrine of the system is universal love.*

This pervades the system; this must rule in the hearts of its disciples. That one principle, wherever it prevails, will overthrow despotism, personal and governmental, and bring all men to the recognition of each other's rights as truly as their own. No wonder that leaders in the French revolution of February, have found in the New Testament the great charter of human rights, the Gospel of Freedom, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." We need no higher guaranty of free-

dom than the rule of Christ, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

8. *The reforming power of Christianity qualifies men for the enjoyment of personal freedom, teaches them to value it in themselves and in others, and prepares them to combine upon equal terms for the maintenance of common interests and rights.*

The spiritual life that the Gospel awakens in the hearts of those that receive it, is itself a medium of recognition and a bond of union. They discern in each other moral affinities more potent and more lasting than outward distinctions. They are drawn to each other in a holy fellowship, and though many, "are one bread, and one body."

9. *The actual reception of the Gospel in the heart awakens there a desire to extend its blessings to others, and makes its possessor a voluntary communicator of good, to the full extent of his ability.*

Every true Christian is an Apostle of Liberty. He seeks to bring all men, without exception, into the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. To do good, to communicate of his own fullness and blessedness to them that are ready to perish, is his daily calling, his constant aim. Is he free outwardly? Then would he have all men free. Is he free spiritually? Then would he make all men free by the truth. There is no such life-long preacher of liberty as he.

Such, briefly sketched, is the system of Christianity. A system that assumes the essential equality of men in everything pertaining to their being, their rights, their enjoyments, their capabilities, and their hopes; a system that makes God so great, and the Soul so great, and Eternity so great, that all distinctions of time and earth dwindle into nothing; that so magnifies the relation of man to God that no power can come in between them without sacrilege. This system has ameliorated the condition of man wherever it has gone;—not by sudden and violent changes, but by sure and lasting reforms. It has overturned the throne of the despot, and knocked off the chains of the oppressed. Even Guizot, proud, conserva-

tive, monarchical, Catholic Guizot, recognizes Christianity as the grand element of liberty and progress in European civilization.

But pre-eminently in relation to itself does Christianity engender and keep alive the true spirit of liberty. When once it enters the soul of man it there abides, as a living principle—a growing power. It will develop itself from within outward. Chains cannot bind it; dungeons cannot wall it in; fire cannot consume it; floods cannot drown it; its ashes are the seed of a new life; the waters that would quench it become vital with its presence and roll it onward in their ceaseless round. Once the soul has come to a recognition of its duty to God, and no power on earth can hinder it from doing that duty. The mightiest throes of the human soul for liberty have been when the mountain of spiritual despotism stood between it and God. A soul penetrated with divine truth, has within it a more than volcanic fire. You may pile mountains on it, and roll in oceans upon these, but it will heave both the mountain and the sea, and find its vent. Woe to institutions, woe to governments, woe to men, that set themselves against a soul that God has filled with his presence and his Spirit. To such a soul Popes and Kings are the Philistines binding Samson with their withes that snap asunder when he shakes his locks. All great achievements for human liberty have been wrought by Conscience struggling for truth. The truth first makes free the individual mind, and he whom God makes free will not be enslaved by man.

The history of English and American liberty is a striking illustration of this point. That liberty sprang directly out of the struggles of conscience for the right to worship God. The attempt at coercion in matters of religion led to one of the most memorable movements in English history or in the history of the world.

Two centuries after Wickliffe's translation of the Scriptures into the English tongue had been publicly condemned and burnt, and his followers, the Lollards, had paid the forfeit of their lives for reading the Bible in their mother tongue—two centuries after this monstrous wrong had rankled in English

breasts, and when by the caprice of Henry VIII. and the pious zeal of Edward VI. England had been in part reformed, an attempt was made to enforce uniformity in those forms of worship and articles of faith that had been retained from Rome. This attempt at coercion in matters of religion was resisted by certain of the clergy and the laity of the Church of England, who as yet were faithful in the bosom of that church and loyal to the realm. They refused to comply with certain points and ceremonies which seemed to savor too much of the old superstitions. These men were stigmatized as *Puritans*, and at length were treated as heretics and rebels. Yet they had no wish to overthrow the church, much less to make a change in civil government; like Luther, they would have been satisfied at first with a few concessions on the part of their civil and ecclesiastical superiors,—with the removal of a few objectionable features in the existing mode of worship; they asked for liberty to reject that which their consciences did not approve; they did not see the scope of their own principles, they hardly began to think of their own rights. They contented themselves with supplicating the throne for the smallest liberty of conscience and of worship.

But their reasonable requests were denied. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, whose leading policy was to blend Popery and Protestantism together, the Puritans were not only required to conform to certain semi-popish usages, but also to *subscribe* to them as consonant with the Word of God. Refusing to do this they were subjected to various civil penalties. The people were denied the services of any ministers who would not wear the priest's dress and conform to the ritual; the ministers refusing so to do were ejected from their parishes, and those who assembled for separate worship were arrested and thrown into prison. The accession of James I. inspired the Puritans with hope. They demanded of him at his inauguration, 'that there should be a new correct translation of the Bible.' (Granted.) 'That a portion of the revenues from tithes might be appropriated towards maintaining ministers in dark regions which had none.' (Refused.) 'That the ministers in districts might be permitted to come together

for mutual benefit.' (Indignantly refused.) 'That pious straitened preachers in terror of offending God by idolatry, and useful to human souls, might not be cast out of their parishes for genuflexions, white surplices, and such like, but allowed some Christian liberty in mere external things.' His majesty told them to conform or he would hurry them out of the country.

The persecutions which these godly men encountered for refusing to conform to that which was contrary to conscience, led them at length to inquire by what *authority* such forms of worship were imposed. It was the king or an archbishop who demanded that they should violate their consciences or be denied the privilege of worshiping God in public. But what right had king or bishop to make such a demand? They searched the Scriptures; they found no such warrant there; and what is more, they found no warrant either for bishops or kings; that the hierarchal constitution of the church and the union of church and state were monstrous usurpations; that God regarded all men alike so far as civil rights are concerned, and that all the disciples of Christ are on an equal footing of right and privilege in his kingdom.

Thus gradually were the Puritans led to the discovery of the great principles of civil and religious liberty. They were men fearing God; and though they were in an established church, for there was no other, and in the beginning felt no dissatisfaction with its polity or with its union with the state, yet abhorring the superstitions and corruptions of the Romish church, and desiring that their own church now declared independent, should be thoroughly purified and reformed, they protested against many things which though small in themselves were of great importance as indicating still an affinity with Rome. Their reasonable remonstrances were unheeded. They were still required to conform. Temptations were held out to induce their compliance. The honors and emoluments of the church, the favor of royalty, in many instances were set before them. These were despised; the Puritans were not the men to sell their consciences for ecclesiastical preferment. Many of them relinquished their all for conscience'

sake. Persecutions were multiplied; these were firmly borne; the Puritans were not the men to shrink in a conflict of principle. A high commission was established,—a virtual inquisition—England became a whispering gallery. But persecution stimulated inquiry and discussion. If they could not worship conscientiously *in* the church, and yet were forbidden to worship *out* of it, the question was one of obedience to human or divine authority. Who had a right to control their faith and worship? Was it the civil power? Was it the ecclesiastical dignitaries? Was it the church itself? With these inquiries they went to the *Word of God*—and they returned with but *one* answer. The great idea broke in upon their minds, that each man for himself, independent of all authority in church or state, has the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. It was the oppression of conscience that led to the assertion of freedom of thought; it was persecution that taught the Puritans the love of liberty. Great principles do not spring up in a moment. They often lie buried in the mind with a mass of useless ore till the whole is cast into the crucible together and refined by fire.

But when a great truth is thus evolved, it is eternal. It cannot die. It becomes a part of the mind itself. So was it with this new idea of religious liberty, which had sprung up in the minds of the Puritans. In the words of another,—"Despotism and superstition were now to encounter a new enemy: the consciousness of rights founded on a sense of responsibility to God. Nothing was more certain than that the simplest forms of religious worship, and that republicanism, both in church and state, must eventually spring from these principles and this spirit."—And such was the fact. Out of that struggle for religious freedom, came, as Hume acknowledges, the elements of English liberty; out of that came the Pilgrims of Plymouth rock; out of that came Hampden, and Cromwell, and Milton, and the Commonwealth of England.

As ancient history demonstrated to us that, before the introduction of Christianity, there was no true idea of liberty in the world; so modern history has shown that the principles

of the Gospel have wrought out that idea, and have woven it into the texture of society and of government. Christianity is the Author of Liberty.

The theme suggests to us several reflections appropriate to the occasion.

1. *We are called upon to renew our gratitude to God that the foundations of our national freedom were laid in His Word.*

Men may sneer at the Puritans as they will, the historic fact remains that to them we owe our liberties. Their struggle for religious liberty led to their emigration to this new world, and to the discovery of principles which were afterwards developed in our free institutions. "New England was a religious plantation, not a plantation for trade." Those who framed the oldest written constitution in America, declare in that instrument—"We all came into these parts of America to enjoy the liberties of the Gospel in purity and peace." Says a quaint writer, "He that made religion as twelve, and the world as thirteen, had not the spirit of a true New England man." "New England," says Mr. Adams, "was the colony of conscience." The first settlers of New England had no schemes of conquest and power, and no dreams of wealth and commercial prosperity, such as influenced the Spaniards and Portuguese, the French, the Dutch, and many English adventurers, in their settlements upon this continent. They came to put themselves beyond the reach of persecution, and to extend the dominion of Christ. I dwell upon this fact because the New England colonies, more than any others, have stamped their impress upon this whole nation—and that impress is *civil and religious liberty, derived from and based upon the Word of God.*

Before the Pilgrims left the Mayflower, they drew up a social compact, forming themselves into a civil body politic. It was a simple act, but it led to the most momentous results. It was an association of freemen for the full guaranty of each other's privileges and rights. It was the germ of this great republic. The Revolution did nothing more than to establish

against foreign tyranny, and for the whole people, what was done in the cabin of that little vessel, as she coasted in bleak December along Cape Cod.

But how came these Pilgrims to form such a constitution? Great, momentous, as the transaction was, with them it was the most simple and natural thing in the world. They had not borrowed the idea from the history of the Roman and Grecian republics; those republics did not contain that idea; they had drawn it directly from the Bible; they had lived under just such a government for many years. It was easy for the men who had formed a Congregational church, to form a Congregational government. They could not do otherwise. No other form of government than that simple, equal, pure democracy, which they had established *as a church*, under the teaching of God's word, could have seemed admissible in civil affairs. They needed no other. The only form of government they thought necessary was an agreement or compact, like their church covenant, signed by all, to make and observe such laws as shall be for the general good. The primitive churches of New England were the models of a pure democracy; a form of government pre-eminently adapted to local churches, whose brotherhood is not ordinarily numerous, and is pervaded with the same spirit of love and peace. In framing a government for so wide an extent of territory as the United States, it was necessary to introduce the representative principle, but the power was retained as far as possible in the hands of the people. Thus has our civil liberty sprung out of the protracted struggles of our Puritan ancestors for freedom of conscience, and our civil constitution from the simple church organization which they adopted. Religious Liberty was the foundation of Political Liberty. We are indebted to the Bible for all that we hold dear. The birth-place of American Independence was not at Lexington or Bunker Hill; it was not in the Hall of Independence at Philadelphia; it was in that little cabin where the Pilgrims made their free constitution; where it was rocked upon the billows, and hugged by wintry winds; and it was when the spirit of Liberty had become strong enough to be feared across

the sea, that the colonies were constrained to fight, not so much to gain their independence as to *prove* it to the world.

2. *Let us remember that our liberty can be perpetuated only by keeping the power of the Gospel uppermost in government, in laws, in our social institutions, in our public and private affairs, and in our own hearts.* There is no freedom but of the Truth. Without the vital, energizing power of Truth, freedom will become a name, a shell, a mockery. This is not mere declamation; it is not professional cant. What are constitutions, what are laws, what is a history, when the spirit that gave birth to these has died out among the people? But to many the spirit of liberty as it burned in the hearts of our fathers is already a mere tradition, while to the hundreds of thousands that are crowding hither from all the lands of oppression, it is a thing unknown and unconceived in its essential character. The modern refugees from European tyranny, the modern emigration to these shores, though it comprises many noble and generous spirits, would never have made American liberty what it is—for these have not been baptized in the spirit of that Truth which alone makes free. We must win them to that truth, we must permeate society with that truth, or there will come upon us first a hollow Conservatism, then a Red Republicanism, then a Military Despotism.

In this view the evangelization of our great cities is of transcendent importance. The great cities are the centers of social life. From them go forth influences to the extremities of the land. If these are corrupt the whole land will be corrupted also; if these are pure the whole land will be purified also. If liberty is to be preserved in its integrity, then must the great cities receive a baptism of the Holy Ghost. No measure is so important to our nation as the reviving of religion in these centers of social, moral, and political power.

3. *If we would preserve our liberties we must see to it that every institution of society or government that is hostile to the Gospel of Christ, is put away.* I have nothing to keep back

here. I must speak the truth in love. The institution of slavery, which exists in some of these United States and is recognized by the general government, is contrary to the whole spirit of Christianity. That institution lingers upon our soil, after its time, only because there the Gospel has not fully penetrated, has not done its work. If once the power of the Gospel shall come upon the churches and the legislation of the States where it exists, that institution will vanish like mists before the sun. But while the institution stands, it is an evidence that the truth is there hampered or shut out, and to that extent *liberty is in danger*. It is impossible that liberty and slavery should forever exist together on the same soil. They can hardly do this for another half century. One or the other must come to an end. Neither can be passive; the interests of each struggle for the ascendency; concessions and compromises will not long hold them together; one or the other must encroach and enlarge; one must go up, the other must go down. Either slavery must go down voluntarily, peaceably, speedily, under the moral influence of the Gospel, or Slavery or Liberty will one day go down in blood. This must be so. Liberty lives only in the light of Truth. Slavery lives only in darkness. The day will brighten or the night will deepen. The disastrous twilight of late shed over us may well excite our fear. The Gospel of Christ must prevail. And if we will not prepare the way for its triumph, God will make way for it by blotting us out from among the nations. It is true of nations as of individuals, that if they will not live by the Gospel, they must die by the Law. For freedom's sake, for the sake of our posterity, for the sake of our brethren involved in this system, the slaveholder and the slave, for Humanity's sake, let us continually pray, and through all fit channels of moral influence let us diligently labor, that this curse may be removed.

4. *We can render substantial sympathy and aid to nations struggling for liberty, mainly by introducing them into the spirit and power of the Gospel of Christ.* We have witnessed one and another impetuous but abortive effort for freedom

by the oppressed nations of Europe. Almost every year, certainly every decade, brings a new uprising of the people, only to be crushed by the relentless arm of power. Why these successive failures? It is because the liberty sought is, for the most part, a mere freedom from outward oppressions —it is because the soul of the people has not been energized with divine truth, because the motive is not great enough, nor the spirit strong enough, to bear up against any and all opposition. What is the matter with France—reeling to and fro "like a blinded giant," tearing out his eyes and wallowing in his blood? Why is there no stability to freedom in France? Because the religious element is wanting in the people. Liberty is a passion, not a principle. The first Revolutionists of France voted God out of existence, and God blotted them and their Republic out of existence. There can be no permanence to liberty in France, till liberty becomes a religious idea and a religious duty.

Now, however, there is hope of better things in Europe, because there the struggle for liberty is becoming more and more a struggle for Truth. That this is true of the leaders is plain from the stirring appeal of Mazzini to the people of England.

"A mighty question," he says, "is now being agitated in Europe between two principles which have divided the world since its creation; and these two principles are liberty and authority. The human mind desires to progress according to its own light, not by favor of concession, but by virtue of the law of its own life. Authority says to it: Rest where thou art; I alone strike the hour of the march; when I am silent every thing should rest, for all progress which is accomplished without me and beyond me, is impious. The human mind interrogates itself; it feels its own right and power; it finds that the germ of progress is in itself, that strength and right come to it from God, and not from an intermediate power coming between itself and God, as if charged to lead it. Hence spring revolt and resistance, and hence the anomalous situation of Europe. The conscience of the human race is struggling with tradition, which desires to enchain it; the future and the past dispute for the collective life of humanity, and for that of the individual. Every man

who in these struggles ever stifled yet ever re-appearing; in this series of manifestations and violent repressions which have constituted European history for two-thirds of a century, sees only the action of some turbulent factions, or the result of some accidental or material causes, as a deficit, a famine, a secret conspiracy or cabinet intrigue; understands nothing of the facts of history, nothing of the laws of which, by those facts, history becomes the expression. And he who in the greatest questions of the suffrage, of proletarian emancipation, and of nationality, sees nothing but the subjects of political discussion, having no connection with the religious idea, with the providential development of humanity, understands neither God nor man, and degrades to the proportions of a pigmy intelligence, a battle of giants, of which the stake is a step in advance in the universal education of mankind, or a step backward towards the world which we had believed to have ended with the middle ages."

The same spirit is alive in Hungary. My hope for Hungary,—and it is a great and confident hope,—lies in the fact that the element of religious freedom is there, and that the Austrian despot is now trying to crush the liberties of the people at that point. The Protestant Church of Hungary embraces 3,000,000, comprising much of the intelligence, virtue, and talent of the land. This church has endured fiery trials for its faith. Ferdinand II. took a solemn oath to hunt every Protestant from his kingdom, even if it cost him his crown and his life. Their property was confiscated; preachers were forced from their office; churches occupied by soldiers; the peasants were driven to mass by the bayonet, and in 1670, under some false political pretext the whole church in Hungary was well nigh destroyed. Only twenty parishes survived. Their parish schools were closed, and the books and teachers of a different faith were forced upon them. But through storm after storm the religious element has survived, and of late years the churches have had rest, and, walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, have been multiplied. Such has been the education of a large proportion of the Hungarian people. A hatred of religious despotism is one of the deepest feelings in the national mind. These free spiritual churches have been the nurseries of lib-

erty. Says Mr. C. L. Brace, "Every church or parish chooses its own preacher, appoints his salary, dissolves connection with him when it chooses, and manages its parish school in the most congregational manner." There is also a series of *representative* bodies by which the churches are regulated without sacrificing their liberties. Says the same intelligent observer :—

"The Hungarians, as is natural after such a history of suffering under ecclesiastical tyranny, have a deep and abiding dread of priestly rule. Accordingly they have established, that in every church, every assembly, every council, there should be certain men, appointed from the *laity*, to aid in guiding the proceedings, and especially to take charge of the monetary affairs. In consequence, every Assembly of the Seniors, every Convention of Superintendents, every Church Meeting, has its *two* presiding officers—clergyman and layman, the latter usually having the title of *Curator* or *Inspector*."

This Constitution Austria has now infringed. It has abolished some of its democratic features, and has put the appointment of church officers in the hand of military commandants. In that act lies the hope of Hungary. The last thread of the screw is turned. The oppressor now pinches God's truth, and the Word of God is not bound! Another turn and the screw snaps, and rebounds against the oppressor. Oh! if there is piety in Hungary, if her prisons shall but be filled with praying men—with martyrs for the truth—her salvation is sure. And here the character of her great leader inspires confidence. Observe his acknowledgment of a Bible presented in England.

M. Kossuth said,—"I thank you. I take it for no merit in my life that I am a religious man ;—not for any merit of mine, but because it is a necessity to every honest and thinking man, and because it is the most rich and fruitful source of those sentiments and those feelings which lead to happiness in this world and bliss in the world to come. I shall value it because I take religion to be the most rich source of that consolation which I have wanted so often in my life.

Being a religious man, and because religious, as well an enemy to superstition, intolerance, and fanaticism, as, on the other hand, the friend of freedom, I readily confess that it is *from this great book* that I have learned the principle of loving my neighbor as myself, and strength and courage to act in the great cause which has always been the guide of my life."

Thou Noble Magyar! Scion of a race that from patriarchal Asia poured into feudal Europe the wild free spirit of the desert, that early gave its monarchs and its sons to the baptism of the cross, and through centuries of darkness and oppression clung to its freedom and its faith,—thou who with prophet's tongue didst stir thy people to battle for the right, and who with martyr's zeal didst peril fortune, honor, friends, family, and life for thy country's good,—thou who knowest to use power for thy people and to despise it for thyself—we bid thee WELCOME to the land of the Pilgrims, the land of Washington, the land where Kosciusko found his honored grave. We welcome thee for thine own sake and thy country's. We know the story of thy wrongs and sufferings. We know the faith that preferred death by the scimetar of the Mussulman to the vow of the false prophet. We know the heroism that for years bore up in thy far banishment, the cause of Hungary before the world and God. We welcome thee to a dominion over free hearts that honor virtue, truth, and liberty. Here behold what God hath wrought by the power of his truth and the might of his arm. Here learn more fully that the Truth makes free, and cheer thy soul with kindly sympathies, and with the faith of the Pilgrim's God! In thy own tongue we bid thee welcome. *Eljen! Isten Hozta!* Kossuth!

But not as an individual only do we welcome the patriot chief of Hungary. He is the embodiment of a principle, the representative of a national sentiment, the type of a new order of things.

"All thoughts that mould the age begin
Deep down within the primitive soul,
And from the many slowly upward win
To one who grasps the whole.
In his broad breast the feeling deep
That struggled on the many's tongue,
Swells to a tide of thought, whose surges leap
O'er the weak thrones of wrong.
All thought begins in feeling—wide
In the great mass its base is hid,
And narrowing up to thought stands glorified
A moveless pyramid.
Nor is he far astray who deems
That every hope that rises and grows broad
In the world's heart, by ordered impulse streams
From the great heart of God."

God bless thee, KOSSUTH, and thy poor Hungary! God bless thee, and send thee help from the Sanctuary!

But we owe to him and his country something more than sympathy. And what is that? Not military aid; he does not ask, we cannot render that—but *moral* aid. This, we can render, and in many ways: by sympathy toward him, by demonstration and remonstrance to the world on his behalf, but, most of all, by giving Hungary the Gospel in its fullness; by strengthening her Christian men with our prayers and benefactions. Does any sneer at sending to oppressed nations the Bible in lieu of bayonets? To send the Bible is to send bayonets, for any legitimate use of bayonets. "I came not to send peace but a sword." "Truth," says Milton, "is next to the Almighty!" It will fight its own way—it will do its own work. We must make sacrifices to fill Europe with the light of Truth. Hear again Mazzini. This he says is the touch-stone of faith:

"When any one says to me, 'Behold a good man,' I ask, 'How many souls has he saved?' When any one says to me, 'Behold a religious people,' I inquire what it has done and suffered to bring humanity to its belief.

"It is to man, and not to a certain number of men, that God has given life, the sun, the fruits of the earth, his law, and the capability

of comprehending and of obeying it. It was for all men that Jesus died upon the Cross. And you who honor the name of God, and murmur unceasingly the name of Christ, what have you given, what do you give, for all men? For whom do you die, for whom do you dare martyrdom? By what do you render testimony to the unity of the human race, of which you are only a member? What work of education do you accomplish upon earth?"

Oh what a faith and what a piety do this age demand—demand of us! A mighty earthquake of the nations is at hand! We hear its rumbling; the next spring may witness its convulsions. God will shake terribly the nations. Now, in this momentary lull, is the Christian's seed time. Why sleep we then? Why stand we here idle? Up, men of God! up! Pour His truth upon the nations: give Italy light; give Hungary light; and from those centers the light shall radiate through all Europe, shall brighten in all the earth, till the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ!

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